



Making Tough Decisions Using Your Core Values



*A practical guide to making confident,
authentic choices*



Introduction

We all face moments when the “right” choice isn’t obvious. Maybe you’re torn between two great options... or two difficult ones. In those moments, advice from friends, pros/cons lists, and even gut feelings, can get muddled.

The good news? You already have a built-in decision-making compass: your core values.

This guide will show you how to use them to make decisions that feel right for you - even if they’re hard.

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Why values are the most reliable decision-making tool

When emotions run high or external pressure builds, values help you cut through the noise. They act like the true north on a compass - steady, personal, and deeply connected to your sense of self.

Why values-based decisions matter:

- They reduce regret (because your choice feels authentic).
- They strengthen self-trust (you know you can rely on your own compass).
- They make “no” easier when something doesn’t align.

Example:

You’re offered a high-paying job that requires frequent travel. If one of your top values is family, and the role means missing important moments at home, saying no - while hard - protects what matters most to you.

Reflection Prompt:

Think of a past decision you regret. Was it misaligned with your values?



How to identify your true (not inherited) core values

We all carry values passed down from family, culture, education, or work. Some fit us perfectly; others may no longer serve who we are today.

Here's a quick process to identify your current core values:

1. *Recall peak moments*

When in life did you feel most fulfilled?

What values were present?

2. *Notice triggers*

When do you feel frustration or anger? Often a value is being violated.

3. *Sort and Prioritise*

Choose your top 5 from the list on the next page.

Mini Exercise:

Write down the last time you felt proud of yourself.

Which value were you living out in that moment?



How to identify your true (not inherited) core values (continued)

Here's a sample list of common values to help you get started. Circle or highlight the ones that resonate most with you, then narrow down to your top five.

Accountability	Achievement	Adventure	Authenticity
Balance	Beauty	Bravery	Calm
Caring	Challenge	Collaboration	Commitment
Community	Compassion	Confidence	Connection
Consistency	Contribution	Courage	Creativity
Curiosity	Determination	Diversity	Empathy
Equality	Fairness	Faith	Family
Freedom	Friendship	Fun	Generosity
Gratitude	Growth	Harmony	Health
Honesty	Hope	Humility	Independence
Integrity	Joy	Justice	Kindness
Knowledge	Leadership	Learning	Love
Loyalty	Mindfulness	Openness	Optimism
Passion	Patience	Peace	Perseverance
Personal Development	Professionalism	Reliability	Respect
Responsibility	Security	Self-Discipline	Service
Simplicity	Spirituality	Stability	Success
Sustainability	Teamwork	Trust	Truth
Wealth	Wisdom		

Note: This is only a sample - you can add your own if something else resonates more.



The “Values Filter” method for any decision

Here’s a repeatable process to check any decision against your values:

Step 1 - Name the Decision

Write it in one clear sentence (e.g., “Should I accept this new job?”)

Step 2 - Identify Relevant Values

Pick 2-3 values most connected to the decision.

Step 3 - Ask the Alignment and Conflict Questions

Alignment: How does this choice reflect or honour this value?

Conflict: In what way might this choice work against this value?

Step 4 - Choose with Intention

Ask yourself: “If I chose this and looked back in 5 years, would I be proud of how it aligned with my values?”



What to do when values clash

Some decisions are hard because two values you care about are pulling in different directions.

Examples:

Honesty vs. Kindness: Do you tell the full truth if it might hurt someone?

Freedom vs. Security: Do you take a risky leap or stick with stability?

When values clash:

- Acknowledge both as valid - you're not choosing between good and bad, but between good and good.
- Rank which value is most important for this specific situation, not forever.
- Consider short-term vs long-term effects.

Reflection Prompt:

Think of a recent tough choice.

Which two values were in tension?

Which did you choose, and why?



Closing Thoughts

Making tough decisions gets easier when you trust your inner compass.

Your core values don't just help you choose - they help you live in a way that's true, consistent, and deeply fulfilling.

Next Step:

If you'd like more tools to help you clarify your values and live them every day, coaching could be a good next step for you.

Click [here](#) to find out more about my values-based coaching approach and how to book a free 30-minute Discovery Call.

